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ABSTRACT

This fully revised manual of procedures for evaluation visits presents guidelines for site visits to library schools seeking accreditation for their programs of study. Visits to such schools provide the Committee on Accreditation with data to assist in reaching a judgment whether to grant accredited status. The area of responsibility for the committee is defined and excerpts from the 1972 Standards for Accreditation are used to define the categories of accreditation. The body of the manual provides detailed instructions for administration, scheduling, applications, team composition, travel and financial arrangements, visit formats, activities and limitations, content and preparation of reports, committee decision-making processes and report notifications, appeals, public relations, accreditation status, and visits conducted in cooperation with regional associations. A separate section addresses the special aspects of continuing review of accredited programs. An advisory or consultant service is provided to assist library schools working towards accreditation, as well as procedures for handling complaints against accredited programs. (Author)

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MANUAL OF

PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATION VISITS

UNDER

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION, 1972

Revised 1977

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The Manual of Procedures for Evaluation Visits Under Standards for Accreditation, 1972 was first issued in October, 1972. In the fall of 1973 it was reissued in its present format in order to permit insertion of replacement sheets as revisions in procedure are made by the Committee on Accreditation. This full revision of the Manual was completed by the COA in the spring of 1977. Please discard all previous copies.

Definition of Terms

As Used In

Manual of Procedures for Evaluation Visits

Library school - the professional unit (school, department, division, etc.) organized and maintained by an institution of higher education for the purpose of graduate library education leading to the first professional degree.

Executive officer - the dean, director, chairperson, or head of the library school.

President - the chief administrative officer (e.g. president, chancellor) of the institution in which the library school is located.

Office - the secretariat for the Committee on Accreditation provided by the Accreditation Officer of the COA, and staff of the accreditation unit.

MANUAL OF
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MANUAL OF PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATION VISITS UNDER STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION, 1972

A. COMMITTEE ON ACCREDITATION

1. Area of Responsibility

The Committee on Accreditation (COA) of the American Library Association (ALA) is a standing committee consisting of ten members appointed by the ALA Executive Board. Its charge is "to be responsible for the execution of the accreditation program of the American Library Association, and to develop and formulate standards of education for librarianship for the approval of the Council." ALA staff liaison for the Committee is provided by the Accreditation Officer of the COA and staff of the accreditation unit.

B. STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION, 1972

2. Adoption and Effective Date

On June 27, 1972, the ALA Council adopted, effective January 1, 1973, the 1972 Standards for Accreditation of graduate programs of library education leading to the first professional degree. The Council rescinded, effective June 30, 1972, the 1951 Standards for Accreditation.

3. Categories of Accreditation

Categories of accreditation under the 1972 Standards for Accreditation are:

(a) Accredited - For a program which gives evidence of full compliance with the Standards.

(b) Accredited conditionally (to a specified date not to exceed two years) - For a program accredited under the 1972 Standards which when revisited displays a failure to maintain standards. Accreditation will be continued beyond the date specified by the COA only on condition that designated changes are made. (See also 35) By definition no program can be assigned to this category when it is evaluated under the 1972 Standards for the first time.

C. VISITS FOR PURPOSES OF ACCREDITATION

4. Evaluation Visits

As one step in fulfilling its responsibility for the execution of the accreditation program of the ALA, the Committee provides for site visits to library schools seeking accreditation of programs under the Standards for Accreditation. Visits to such schools are made for the purpose of evaluating the school's program in the light of the Standards for Accreditation, to provide data to assist the COA in reaching a judgment whether to grant accredited status. Evaluation visits are considered only for those programs located in institutions which hold accredited status from the appropriate institutional accrediting agency. Regionally accredited status is not required for Canadian institutions.

5. Letter of Intent and Subsequent Correspondence Regarding Initial Accreditation

A school seeking initial accreditation of programs under the Standards must file with the Accreditation Officer a letter of intent to request an evaluation visit. The letter must be filed at least six months prior to the beginning of the twelve-month period during which the school desires a visit in order to provide the COA with planning flexibility. It may be withdrawn by the school at any time upon written notification to the Accreditation Officer. If a letter of intent is withdrawn, a new letter of intent must be submitted prior to a subsequent request for a visit. Following receipt of a school's letter of intent, copies of all subsequent correspondence from the Office to the school regarding the visit are sent to the president of the institution.

6. Schedule of Visits for Initial Accreditation

In setting up a tentative schedule of initial site visits, the Committee will consider the following factors: school's preference as to the time of the visit; re-accreditation visits that have been scheduled; schedule of visits of regional accrediting agencies (see also 48); and geographical considerations which influence costs and availability of visiting teams. The Accreditation Officer notifies the school of the period in which a visit can be tentatively scheduled, asks the school to indicate alternative dates convenient for a visit, and specifies the date when the school's formal application for accreditation must be received by the Committee. A school requesting initial accreditation of its program is informed that the decision regarding whether a visit should be scheduled will be based upon the COA's evaluation of the school's application. (See also 13)

7. Schedule of Visits for Reaccreditation

A program accredited under the 1972 Standards is notified well in advance of the date determined by the COA for its reaccreditation site visit. (See also 49) Prompt acknowledgement by the school of this notification is required. While a revisit may be postponed only under most unusual circumstances, the COA will make every effort to comply with a school's request for an earlier visit.

8. Application Materials

Whether a school is seeking initial accreditation or is being considered for reaccreditation, it receives from the COA copies of the Standards for Accreditation; the Manual of Procedures for Evaluation Visits; the Self-Study: A Guide to the Process and to the Preparation of a Report for the Committee on Accreditation of the American Library Association; and a compilation of materials up-dated annually, which includes data concerning the schools offering accredited programs, as well as various documents and informational pieces related to the Standards. The school's application consists of a self-study, including a cover sheet and signed declaration, accompanied by a letter from the president of the institution requesting an evaluation visit. A current catalog of the school should be included with the self-study. (See also 9) Confirmation of the site visit is contingent upon the acceptance of the self-study by the COA.

9. Withdrawal of Letter of Intent

A request for initial accreditation may be withdrawn without prejudice at any time (even after evaluation) prior to final action by the Committee on Accreditation. All costs up to the date of withdrawal of the request must be paid by the institution. For the school to present another request, a new letter of intent must be

filed within the time schedule specified in 5 above.

10. Eligibility for Site Visit for Initial Accreditation

A library school seeking initial accreditation may present its request for an evaluation visit and its self-study any time (a) after the program to be reviewed has been in operation long enough for students to have been graduated from it and (b) when the school believes that the program meets the Standards for Accreditation. A school preparing to request an initial evaluation visit should correspond with the Office in advance of applying for a visit and become familiar with the Standards, the self-study process, and accrediting procedures. The school may seek advice and assistance from the Accreditation Officer. Upon request to the Accreditation Officer, arrangements can be made for representatives of the school to meet with members of the COA during the Annual Conference or Midwinter Meeting of ALA. (See also 50, 52, 53)

11. Preliminary Consultant Visit

The school may wish to arrange for a visit from a consultant before requesting a formal evaluation visit. The Office can furnish names of individuals whose knowledge and experience might make them useful consultants to the school. Members of COA, however, cannot serve in this capacity. Although the Office provides this service upon request, the consultants have no official connection with the COA and do not speak for the COA. (See also 54) In their reports, consultants should avoid any statements which might be interpreted as a forecast of action by the Committee.

12. Submission of Application

At least six weeks prior to the date designated for receipt by the Committee of the school's application (i.e. the self-study, school

catalog; the letter from the president or authorized representative; the signed declaration; and the completed cover sheet) (see also 6,7,8,9), the Accreditation Officer supplies the school with the names and mailing addresses of the members of the COA. The school then sends one copy of its application to each member of the COA and five copies to the Office (a total of fifteen copies). Materials must be postmarked no later than November 15 for consideration by the COA at the ALA Midwinter Meeting, or April 15 for COA consideration at the ALA Annual Conference so that members may have ample opportunity to study the materials in advance of the meeting. Normally applications for visits are considered only at meetings of the Committee held during the Midwinter Meeting and the Annual Conference.

13. Adequacy of the Self-Study

To be considered for a site visit, a school seeking initial accreditation or reaccreditation for its program must submit to the COA a self-study which constitutes a workable document for a team. The COA determines by vote whether the self-study meets this requirement. Seven affirmative votes are required. When a member of the COA is employed by the parent institution or the library school under discussion, or is a student currently enrolled in the institution, the member leaves the meeting and may not participate in the discussion or vote on the decision. With an affirmative vote and, in the case of a school seeking initial accreditation, a decision by the COA that the program is ready for a visit (see also 14), the Committee identifies a team and the Accreditation Officer schedules a visit in accordance with paragraphs 6 and 16. If the Committee decides that the self-study is not adequate, it must state clearly the inadequacies of the document (and of the program to the extent that the latter can be determined). This information is transmitted by letter from the Office to the president and to the executive officer of the school. The school may, on a subsequent date, submit a new self-study in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 8.

14. Readiness for an Initial Accreditation Visit

With an affirmative vote on the adequacy of the self-study for a school seeking initial accreditation, the COA then determines by vote whether the program is ready for a visit. Seven affirmative votes are required. (The voting exclusions in paragraph 13 apply here.) With an affirmative vote, the Committee identifies a team and the Accreditation Officer schedules a visit in accordance with paragraphs 6 and 16. When the evidence in the application does not permit a determination of readiness for a visit, or when the evidence indicates to the Committee that the program does not meet the Standards, the Committee will transmit its concerns by letter to the president of the institution and to the school. The institution may: (a) Respond in writing to the Committee's concerns; OR (b) Send one or more representatives to a meeting of the COA to respond to the Committee's concerns; OR (c) Withdraw its request for accreditation. If the institution chooses to respond under option (a) or (b) above, the Committee will evaluate the response and determine whether: (a) To visit the school, OR (b) To give the school the option of accepting or declining a visit. The Committee will transmit to the president of the institution and to the school by letter the reasons for its decision.

15. Cautionary Statement to Applicant Schools

In all cases where a site visit is approved, the Accreditation Officer informs the school in advance that approval of a visit is not in itself accreditation and that the visit may not result in accreditation. The school is informed that the recommendations in the report of the visiting team are advisory to the COA which is the group that will determine whether accreditation is to be granted. (See also 3)

16. Scheduling of Site Visit

Site visits are scheduled at a time that will make it possible for a report to be written and received by the COA no later than six weeks before the next formal meeting at the ALA Annual Conference or Midwinter Meeting. Normally, no visit is scheduled between April 15 and the Annual Conference or between November 1 and the Midwinter Meeting. Visits are not made during the summer sessions. When the COA approves a school's request for a site visit for initial accreditation or arranges a visit for reaccreditation, it is the Accreditation Officer who confirms the dates of the visit with the school. (See also 6)

17. Composition of Visiting Team

A visiting team is usually composed of four members, but not less than three nor more than six persons, including at least one member or former member of the COA. In the selection of non-members of the COA to serve on a team, due consideration is given to such factors as representation of both educators and practitioners, the special fields emphasized in the school's curriculum, the geographic area in which the school is located where this seems to be a pertinent consideration, and economy of time and expenses for travel. If a library school wishes to suggest a specific type of representative on the team, its reasons must be stated. The COA, however, has final authority in the formation of teams. The Accreditation Officer may accompany the team as an observer for the Committee. (See also 22) On visits to Canadian schools, the Canadian Library Association is invited to send, at the expense of the CLA and subject to the approval of the school, a member of the CLA staff to observe the visit.

18. Appointment of Visiting Team

Before the members of the team are formally appointed, the Accreditation Officer determines whether the persons who are to be recommended are willing to serve at the time the visit has been scheduled. Prospective team members are asked to identify schools for which they would be unable to serve as a team member because of prior association with the school as a student, faculty member, or consultant, or for personal reasons. The names of the proposed team members are then submitted by the Accreditation Officer to the executive officer of the school in order for the school to react to the composition of the proposed team in relationship to its distinctive characteristics and in order to avoid appointment of individuals who may not be acceptable to the school. The school may not, however, suggest specific individuals to serve on its visiting team. Following agreement with the school on the suggested team members, the Accreditation Officer informs these individuals of the school which they will visit and provides each member with a copy of the school's application, including the self-study and other documentation that has been submitted. (See also 8)

19. Arrangements Made by Accreditation Officer

The Accreditation Officer is responsible for the following arrangements connected with the visit:

(a) Scheduling the visit.

(b) Sending material to the executive officer of the library school pertaining to the procedures and regulations governing evaluation visits.

(c) Transmitting necessary documents and instructions to the members of the visiting team as far in advance of the visit as possible.

(d) Providing the team chair with a sample letter that can be used in making arrangements with the executive officer of the school for the visit.

20. Duties of Team Chair

One person is designated by the COA to chair the visiting team. The duties of the team chair are: (See also 24)

(a) To arrange through correspondence with the executive officer of the school, the details of the visit, including appointments with executive and administrative officers of the institution.

(b) To outline the plan of the visit to the school's executive officer; to request that the dates of the visit be announced in advance to faculty and students and to the heads of libraries and other facilities likely to be visited; and to ask that the necessary documentation be available for examination by the visitors. (See "Sources of Evidence" in Standards for Accreditation, 1972.)

(c) To make certain that the school understands that, in order to allow team members as much time as possible for their work, no formal social events should be scheduled with the site visit team. (See also 26)

(d) To assign specific duties to the members of the team.

(e) To arrange local transportation with the school's executive officer well in advance of the team's arrival, including transportation to and from the airport to the hotel as well as between the hotel and the campus during the visit.

(f) To schedule and conduct a planning conference of the team on or before the first evening of the visit.

(g) To arrange for an information session on accreditation practices for faculty, students, and all other interested parties.

(h) To lead the team discussion in conferences with the executive officer and faculty of the library school and with the executive officers of the institution.

(i) To maintain a log of the visit showing how the time of each team member was spent.

(j) To maintain a schedule throughout the visit to assure that appropriate classes and facilities are visited for a sufficient length of time, that at least one team member interviews every regular member of the faculty, and that students have ample opportunity to express their views of the program to team members.

(k) To assure opportunity to the school's executive officer, faculty, and students to describe the strengths of the school and the program under review as well as whatever weaknesses and problems may exist.

(l) To be certain that team members recognize the importance of innovation in library education and that they avoid making comparisons with their own or other library schools as they discuss the application of the Standards for Accreditation, 1972.

(m) To assure that the conduct of each member is appropriate throughout the visit and to consult immediately with the Accreditation Officer should any problem of this nature prove serious. The team chair may, after consultation with the Accreditation Officer and/or the Chair of the COA,

remove an individual from the team during the visit if the situation requires.

(n) To write a report of the visit. (See also 27-30)

(o) To lead discussion of the team report when the team appears before the COA at the Midwinter Meeting or Annual Conference.

21. Travel Arrangements

Unless otherwise instructed, team members make their own travel arrangements, including the purchase of tickets. They should plan to be at the institution (or occupy the housing arranged by the school) only during the period of the official visit (Sunday afternoon or evening until Thursday afternoon) and should not arrive in advance of other team members nor remain after other members of the team have left the institution. Exceptions may have to be made by the team chair to accommodate the schedules of commercial carriers. Team visitors should report their travel schedules to the library school, the team chair, and the Accreditation Officer at least two weeks in advance of the visit.

22. Reimbursement for Expenses

Reimbursement for travel and living expenses of the visit is made directly to the team members and the Accreditation Officer (if he/she accompanied the team as an observer) by the ALA which is then reimbursed by the library school. Depending upon institutional rules or state regulations, the cost of lodging and meals during the visit may be charged to an institutional account. The visitors receive no honoraria. If a travel advance is desired, the visitor should forward his/her request to the Accreditation Officer who will arrange with the ALA Accounting Office to issue a check in the amount requested. The request should be received at least fourteen

days in advance of the visit. After a visit, each visitor immediately sends a statement of his/her total expenses for the visit to the Accreditation Officer who endorses the statement and sends it to the ALA Accounting Office for payment. The Accounting Office reimburses the individual visitors, then cumulates the expense statements (including that of the Accreditation Officer if he/she accompanied the team as an observer), adds $350.00 to cover office expenses incurred in connection with the visit (i.e. telephone, postage, duplication of reports, etc.), and forwards the total account to the school for repayment. (See also 48)

23. Preparation of Visiting Team Members

The visitors prepare for the visit by becoming as familiar as possible with the library school as presented in the self-study and with the organization of the institution itself. They should also be thoroughly familiar with the Standards for Accreditation, 1972, and with the Manual of Procedures for Evaluation Visits. As one of its functions, the COA provides periodic sessions to prepare prospective members of its visiting teams.

24. Format of Site Visit

Normally, site visits begin on Sunday afternoon or evening with a planning session of the team and end on the following Thursday when the team leaves. All activities here outlined are assigned to the members of the visiting team by the team chair, and are not left to arrangement by individual members. It is important that team members do not perform other than assigned duties and that they do not deviate from their schedules without consulting the chair. In accomplishing the assignments listed below, a single team member may be responsible for one or more of them. The visitors must allow

sufficient time on the site to:

(a) Hold a preliminary meeting to plan the visit.

(b) Meet with the executive officer of the library school at the beginning of the visit.

(c) Provide an information session early in the visit for faculty and students.

(d) Confer with members of the faculty individually as arranged and assigned by the team chair. As early as possible in the visit, a meeting should be arranged with the faculty as a group in order to assure that team members identify all of the full-time faculty and as many of the part-time faculty as feasible.

(e) Meet with students. Informal talks with students are preferable to scheduled conferences.

(f) Meet with representative alumni of the school and employers of its graduates.

(g) Confer with the president and other appropriate executive and administrative officers of the institution, including the affirmative action officer.

(h) If possible, visit at least one class of each full-time instructor. The visitors should remember that attendance at one class gives only fragmentary information regarding students and faculty, but observation in several classes gives the visitors a cumulative impression of teaching methods and effectiveness and of student participation. The visitors should make themselves as unobtrusive as possible and should discourage any variations in class procedures because of their presence. Visitors do not participate in

class discussion, and questions should not be directed to them during class sessions.

(i) Confer with the school's non-instructional staff members to determine their role in supporting the program being evaluated.

(j) Confer with the person in charge of placement of library school graduates, whether this individual is a member of the library school staff or the central placement office.

(k) Confer with the institution's head librarian and the librarians having responsibility for library service specifically intended for the school.

(l) Examine representative student records to verify the school's admission standards and procedures, its distribution of student aid funds, its academic requirements, and its counseling procedures.

(m) Observe the physical resources and facilities which support the school's program(s) for which accreditation or reaccreditation is being sought.

(n) Examine the evidence presented by the library school to demonstrate that its program(s) meet the Standards, including course outlines and syllabi, faculty publications, faculty evaluations and student projects. (Verify all available "Sources of Evidence" in Standards for Accreditation, 1972.)

(o) Confer as a group as often as necessary during the visit on observations made by individual team members that should be verified by similar observation of other team members.

(p) Before departure, plan the report to the COA and, under the

chair's leadership, prepare a draft, including recommendations. Preparation of the final report is expedited by the thoroughness of the draft work completed prior to the team's departure, and with this in mind the chair may wish to urge team members to delay their departure to late afternoon on the final day of the visit (Thursday).

25. Conferences with School's Executive Officer, Faculty, Students, Alumni, Institutional Officers, and Employers

Desirable conferences with the executive officer, faculty, students, and alumni of the library school, the officers of the institution, and employers of the school's graduates are detailed under "Sources of Evidence" in various sections of the Standards for Accreditation. These conferences give the visitors an opportunity to raise questions suggested by their examination of the self-study and other materials and to discuss plans for development of the library school. They also provide the individuals being interviewed opportunity to describe to the team the strengths and distinctive characteristics, as well as the weaknesses and problems, of the program under review.

26. Limitations on Activities of Visiting Team Members

During a visit for evaluation purposes, the team members refrain from giving advice and recommendations to the school and from describing, commenting on, or comparing the programs of other schools. No interviews for local publicity will be given by team members. Every precaution must be exercised to avoid any statements which might be interpreted as a prediction of action by the COA. In order to allow the team members as much time as possible for their work, no formal social events may be scheduled by the school in connection with a

site visit. Informal sessions with groups of students or faculty, which may include a "working lunch," may be scheduled at the discretion of the team's chair. At sessions planned to enable team members to talk to alumni of the school and employers of its graduates, the school's executive officer and members of the faculty may be present to perform introductions, but must then leave the meeting. Such occasions are working sessions for the team and must not be planned or arranged as social events. (See also 20c)

27. Purpose of Visiting Team Report

The report of the visiting team provides information on which the COA can base its judgment as to the accreditability of the school's program.

28. Preparation of Visiting Team Report

The team is responsible for the preparation of a draft of the report on site. The report is completed as soon as possible after the visit; and, after verification of the factual section by the school, the chair of the visiting team assumes responsibility for writing the report, but may assign specific sections of it to individual team members. As the document upon which the COA bases action, the report must be approved by all visitors before it is submitted to the Accreditation Officer for reproduction and distribution to members of the COA. If there is not full agreement on any point, the minority opinion(s) must be reflected in the report made to the COA.

29. Content of Visiting Team Report

The report of the visiting team contains the following parts:

(a) An introductory section giving the name of the library school, names of visitors, dates, the purpose of the visit, and a brief history of the development of the

program for which accreditation is sought.

(b) Factual section: a factual description of the program of the school, organized according to the six major headings of the Standards, which serves as the basis for the later statements and recommendations in the evaluative section. Descriptive and statistical data gathered during the visit, or extracted from the school's documentation and verified during the visit, are included here.

(c) Evaluative section: the team's evaluation of the program of the school organized according to each of the six Standards and based upon the preceding factual section. Comments under each heading deal both with desirable features and conditions, and with points of weakness. Observations and comments on conditions observed and on conferences held during the visit, suggestions for improvement, and recommendations for action by the library school are included.

(d) A consecutively numbered list of the principal recommendations of the report, each of which must be clearly justified in the Standards for Accreditation, 1972.

(e) The visiting team's recommendation for COA action, which forms the final section of the report.

30. Procedures for Writing and Reviewing the Visiting Team Report

It is the responsibility of the visiting team, under the leadership of its chair, to prepare the report and to provide for its review by the institution, the library school, and the COA. The sequence of procedures is as follows:

(a) Prior to arrival on campus, team members prepare a draft

of the factual section(s) for which each has been made responsible by the team's chair. This exercise calls attention to information that may be found lacking, confusing, or in error in the self-study and alerts the team to factual data that must be obtained during the visit. The sharing of this initial draft is an essential activity of the team during its initial meeting on Sunday.

(b) While on site, the visiting team verifies the initial draft of the factual portion of the report, supplementing and amending as necessary from data acquired. The chair is responsible for the final editing of the factual section, but should have all of the information required by the time of the team's departure.

(c) While on site, the visiting team also prepares a draft of its tentative evaluation of the program with respect to each of the Standards, with its recommendations. The team must also give careful consideration to its final recommendation to the COA on the accreditation of the program, and the chair must obtain a tentative vote of each team member on this recommendation before the team departs. (See also 24p)

(d) The chair of the visiting team completes the final version of the factual section of the report and mails it within one week of the end of the site visit for verification or correction to the president of the institution and the executive officer of the library school. The school returns the factual section to the chair of the visiting team within two weeks of the date of receipt. A written acceptance of the factual section by the executive officer

of the library school constitutes endorsement of the accuracy of the data contained therein except where specifically noted by the executive officer. The chair of the visiting team, with the approval of the other members of the team, may accept the school's corrections or, through communication with the school's executive officer, may arrive at a statement that is satisfactory to both. No team member other than the chair should communicate with the school after the conclusion of the site visit. A written acceptance by the school's executive officer of the revised factual section is required before the evaluative section of the report can be completed. If agreement between the school and the visiting team cannot be obtained on the factual section, a statement of the unresolved differences accompanies the team's report to the COA. If necessary, the COA, at the institution's request, will send representatives to the school to determine the facts. In such case, the cost (i.e. payment of travel and living expenses of the representatives) is borne by the school.

(e) The chair of the visiting team is responsible for advising other members of the team of any changes in the factual section following its return by the school. Each member of the team will then participate in the completion of the evaluative portion of the report, considering any corrections made in the factual section. All evaluative comments, observations, suggestions, and recommendations

included in this section of the report must be based on clearly stated facts included in the factual section of the report.

(f) The chair of the visiting team is responsible for the final editing of the evaluative portion of the report.

(g) The chair of the visiting team mails the original and one copy of the team's full report to the Accreditation Officer within 28 days of the conclusion of the visit. From this point on, any communication of the school or institution regarding the team visit and the accreditation process must be with the Accreditation Officer, not the team chair. The Accreditation Officer duplicates the team's report and sends copies to the president of the institution and the executive officer of the library school for information. The team's final recommendation for COA action, however, is not included in the copies sent to the institution and the school. A copy of the report is also sent at this time to each member of the COA and to each member of the visiting team.

(h) Upon receipt of the team's full report, the school sends one of the following four responses to the Accreditation Officer for transmittal to the COA;

(1) A statement of acceptance of the report. Or

(2) A statement of withdrawal of the request for accreditation. Or

(3) A written response to the report which becomes part of the documentation considered by the COA and is retained in the COA Office as a part of the

continuing documentation on the program. The written response ordinarily must be received no later than three weeks prior to the COA meeting at which consideration of the report is scheduled. Or

(4) A notice of intent to respond in writing no later than three weeks prior to the next regularly scheduled COA meeting following the meeting at which the team's report would initially have been considered. If the written report is not submitted three weeks before this meeting, the COA will consider the team's report and make its decision.

31. School or Institutional Representation before COA

The executive officer of a library school whose program is under consideration by the COA and/or the president of the institution, or their representatives, may appear before a regularly scheduled meeting of the COA at the written request of the school and/or institution. The timing of such an appearance is determined by the COA in relationship to its schedule. Such an appearance may be requested when the school has had insufficient time to respond to a team report (see also 30h (3)) because the report was received less than three weeks before the COA meeting at which its consideration is scheduled, or where the school and/or institution believe(s) that the COA lacks essential information regarding the program about to be considered for accreditation. (It must be understood, however, that the COA decision on accreditation is made on the basis of the school's situation and condition at the time of the site visit. Changes made subsequent to the visit and actions promised for the future cannot be taken into account by the COA.) While the COA will give

close attention to the presentation, it will not engage in debate with the representatives nor will it submit questions to them. Such representatives may not be present while the COA considers the team's report nor when it votes on the question of accreditation. The COA may invite the executive officer of a library school or the president of the institution to appear before it where the Committee believes that additional information is needed in order for it to make a sound decision. In such cases, only the COA chair directs questions to the school's or institution's representative.

32. Appearance of Visiting Team before the COA

If possible, all members of the visiting team attend the COA meeting at which the report on the school is to be discussed. The Accreditation Officer informs non-COA team members when the COA is scheduled to meet and ascertains at what times they are able to attend. When the agenda is worked out with the chair of the COA, discussion of a school is scheduled when team members can be present. (See also 20o)

33. COA Discussion and Action

After discussion of the report with the visiting team, the non-COA members of the team leave the meeting. The Committee on Accreditation then discusses the team's report and proceeds to take action. To be accredited, or to be accredited conditionally, a program must receive at least seven affirmative votes. When a member of the COA is an employee of the parent institution of the library school under discussion or is a student currently enrolled in the institution, the member leaves the meeting and may not participate in the discussion or vote on the decision.

34. Retroactive Period Covered by Accreditation

When a program is granted accredited status, the accreditation is

retroactive to cover the academic year preceding the academic year in which the evaluation visit is made. The effective date of accredited status is specified in the official notice sent to the president of the institution and the executive officer of the library school. (See also 36)

35. Status of Program Accredited Conditionally

In the case of programs accredited conditionally to a specified date under the 1972 Standards, action taken by the COA following the date specified (see also 3) will result in either:

(a) Accreditation on the basis of documentation submitted to the COA with or without another site visit. Or

(b) Denial of accreditation and termination of conditional status following another site visit.

36. Status of Students in Program From Which Accreditation is Withdrawn

When accreditation is withdrawn from a program, any student enrolled in the program who completes the degree requirements within the eighteen months after the date of withdrawal of accreditation will be considered as having been graduated from an ALA-accredited program. (By "enrolled" is meant actual registration by the student in graduate level course work leading to the first professional degree in library science; it does not include students who have been admitted to begin their study in a term subsequent to the date of the accreditation decision, nor does it include students enrolled in academic units within the institution other than the specific program under review. It does, however, include students enrolled previously in the program, who are still considered active under existing institutional policy, but who did not happen to be registered during the term in which the site visit was made.)

37. Opportunity for School to Request Later Evaluation Visit

In the case of denial or withdrawal of accreditation, the COA will consider without prejudice a request for another evaluation to be scheduled not less than two years from the date of the COA action. Such a request must be accompanied by evidence in the form of a self-study (see 8 above) showing that the school has taken positive action to meet the criticisms outlined in the COA's report and to put the Committee's recommendations into effect.

38. Designation of School's Representative

The Accreditation Officer asks the school, whether it is seeking initial accreditation or reaccreditation, to designate, prior to the Midwinter Meeting or Annual Conference at which the COA will take action on the visiting team's report, the representative of the school to whom the Committee's action is to be reported and where that representative can be reached. Official notice is sent by letter to the president of the institution and the executive officer of the library school. (See also 39, 40)

39. Official Notification of Accreditation by the COA

Immediately following the ALA meeting or conference at which a school's program is accredited or reaccredited, the Accreditation Officer sends a notice to the president of the institution and the executive officer of the library school. The official notice takes the form of a short letter announcing the action of the Committee, specifying where pertinent the effective date of accredited status (see also 34), and informing them that a full report of the Committee will be forthcoming.

40. Official Notification of Non-Accreditation by the COA

If accreditation of a program is denied, withdrawn, or continued conditionally, the Accreditation Officer immediately following the ALA meeting or conference at which the COA action was taken informs the president of the institution and the executive officer of the library school in writing. (See also 38) As soon as possible following the action of the COA, the Accreditation Officer provides the president and the executive officer with the COA's full report and informs them of the appeals procedure. (See also 44)

41. COA Report to School

The full report of the COA is usually the report of the visiting team (minus the team's final recommendation) with an appended statement in the following general form:

> "At its meeting [date], the Committee on Accreditation of the American Library Association received and discussed the report of the visiting team on the [exact name of school].
> It was
> VOTED, that the Committee on Accreditation of the American Library Association [insert here the action taken:
> (1) accredit...
> (2) not accredit...
> (3) continue accreditation of ...
> (4) accredit conditionally to [date]...
> (5) discontinue accreditation of...]
> the program leading to the [exact name of degree] offered by the [exact name of school], under the Standards for Accreditation adopted by the ALA Council, June 27, 1972."

This statement is followed by a list of names of all members of the Committee on Accreditation. The report is duplicated by the Office for distribution. If the report to be sent to the school by the COA requires revision, amplification, or substantial editing, either by the visiting team or a special subcommittee appointed by the chair of the COA, it must have the approval

of the COA before its transmittal to the school. Because of the importance of the decision to the school, it is imperative that the COA and the Office hold to an absolute minimum the amount of time spent in writing, re-writing, and duplicating the report for transmittal.

42. Distribution of Report

The Accreditation Officer sends three copies of the final COA report to the president of the institution and additional copies to the executive officer of the school with the recommendation that the report be distributed to the full-time members of the regular library school faculty, to the administrative officer of the school or college under which the library school is established, and to such other administrative officers of the institution as may be desirable. The report is sent to the president and the school's executive officer by certified mail, return receipt requested. Copies of the report are also sent to the members of the COA and members of the visiting team, and to the Executive Director of the ALA. In the case of a Canadian school, a copy of the report is sent to the Executive Director of the Canadian Library Association as well. One official copy of the final COA report is placed in the bound volume of library school reports kept in the COA files in the Office.

43. Confidentiality of Report

While the executive officer of the school is free to duplicate and distribute the report, the members of the COA and of the visiting team must treat the final COA report as Confidential and may not discuss or reveal any portion of its content. (See also 42) The Accreditation Officer may, however, upon request make the COA

report available to other recognized accrediting agencies by which the institution has been accredited or whose accreditation it is seeking. Requests for information about the reasons for denial or withdrawal of accreditation or for conditional accreditation are referred to the executive officer of the school in question. The Accreditation Officer, members of the COA, and members of the visiting team do not discuss the reasons for action with anyone outside the Committee. Since all comments and recommendations pertaining to schools under COA review are confidential, non-COA members of the visiting team are required to return to the Office copies of the school's application and self-study after they receive the report of final COA action. Members of the COA may retain all materials until the expiration of their terms of membership, at which time the materials are destroyed.

44. Accreditation Appeals Process

Rationale

In order to safeguard the rights of institutions seeking accreditation by the American Library Association of their graduate programs in library education, a formal appeals process is made available. This process is designed for any institution which believes that it has sufficient reason to question the procedures followed by the Committee on Accreditation (COA) of the American Library Association in examining its program. Such questions must of necessity be addressed to one or more of the following issues: (1) whether the COA and the visiting team conformed to the procedures described in the Manual of Procedures for Evaluation Visits Under Standards for Accreditation, 1972 of the COA; (2) whether the visiting team fully determined the facts of the case in accordance with the provisions

of the Standards for Accreditation; and (3) whether the visiting team and the COA correctly applied the Standards for Accreditation to those facts.

Procedure

Any institution which is not granted full accreditation for its program by the COA may appeal the COA decision by filing with the Executive Board of the American Library Association within six weeks after receipt of the full report of such decision, a written statement setting forth in detail the grounds on which the appeal is based.

The Executive Board shall appoint a Select Committee of not fewer than five qualified persons to consider the appeal. Members of the Select Committee shall be drawn from the membership of the American Library Association and shall be persons who are knowledgeable about accreditation and library education. The Select Committee shall determine its own schedule and designate its own chair. In the process of considering an appeal, the Accreditation Officer of the COA shall provide information on accreditation policies and procedures to the Select Committee and Executive Board.

The Select Committee shall hold hearings and make such other inquiries as it deems necessary to conduct a full and detailed investigation. During this investigation, the Select Committee shall have full access to and shall consider all documents and papers relevant to the case. In addition, the Select Committee must obtain the testimony of the visiting team, members of the COA, the Accreditation Officer, and appropriate representatives of the school; it may also call any other witnesses whose testimony the Select Committee deems useful. Witnesses may present oral and written statements, as authorized by the Select Committee. The Select Committee shall not receive or consider statements pertaining to conditions which developed subsequent to the time of the site visit.

The Select Committee shall present to the Executive Board a written report of its findings together with its recommendations. The Executive Board may confer with the Select Committee relative to its report.

Upon receipt of the report of the Select Committee, the Executive Board shall either (1) affirm the decision of the COA or (2) set aside the decision of the COA and remand the case to the COA with appropriate instructions for further proceedings and reconsideration. The Executive Board shall communicate its decision, and the reasons for that decision, in writing to the COA and to the institution. If the COA fails to act responsibly and responsively to a case remanded to it, the Executive Board may act in accordance with Article VIII, Section 8(c) of the Bylaws of the American Library Association.

The initial accreditation decision of the COA may not be made public until the time for any appeal is past or until any appeal is finally administratively determined by these procedures. The accredited status held by the appealing institution shall be continued until such time as the matter is finally resolved.

After the decision on the appeal is determined by the ALA Executive Board, the report of the Select Committee or a summary thereof may, but need not be, published as the ALA Executive Board may determine in its absolute discretion.

45. Public Release of COA Action

Following action by the COA which results in accreditation, the Office releases the information to the ALA Executive Board; to the library press; to the Association of American Library Schools, the

appropriate units of the ALA, and other appropriate organizations in the field of library education; and to the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, the Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation of the U.S. Office of Education, and the appropriate regional accrediting associations. Action which results in conditional accreditation is released in the same manner but in accordance with 44 above. In case of denial of accreditation to a program, the COA and the Office hold such action as confidential, but leave to the library school and its parent institution the decision regarding the release of information concerning such action.

46. List of Accredited Programs

Semi-annually, the Office prepares a revised list of all ALA-accredited programs, including any which have been granted accredited status since the list was last issued, removing any programs whose accredited status has been withdrawn, and revising the categories of accreditation of any programs whose categories have been changed. (But see 44) This list of Graduate Library School Programs Accredited by the American Library Association is sent automatically to each of the schools on the list, to the Canadian Library Association, to the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, to the Division of Eligibility and Agency Evaluation of the U.S. Office of Education, to the regional accrediting agencies, and to the ALA Headquarters staff and members of the COA. In addition, a mailing list is maintained in the Office of all those who have asked to be placed on it. Requests for the list are filled without charge, and the COA distributes the list freely for informational and guidance purposes. Anyone using the list for reference or information purposes should make certain that the latest revision has been received because of the

frequent changes in the information that the list carries. The list includes the address of each school, the name and title of its executive officer, the name of the first professional degree offered, and the designation of additional programs offered.

47. Accredited Status of Library Schools, 1925-1976

The Office distributes upon request an informational piece entitled Accredited Status of Library Schools, which gives dates of accreditation for each school under the several sets of ALA accreditation standards in effect since 1925. Library schools making reference in published catalogs or bulletins to accreditation by the American Library Association should check the accuracy of such references with the Accreditation Officer.

48. Visits in Cooperation with Regional Associations

The procedures as outlined apply to the accrediting program of the Committee on Accreditation without reference to cooperation in accrediting with regional associations. Such cooperation may require adaptation to the procedures of a regional association. If the format of the self-study required by the regional association differs significantly from that specified by the COA, the library school is asked to request permission from the regional association to use the COA's format. The COA carries out without change the details of the procedures for independent visits, a report to the COA, action by the COA, a report to the library school, and release of information on action.

D. CONTINUING REVIEW OF ACCREDITED PROGRAMS

49. Periodic Revisits

In the case of accredited programs, periodic revisits for continuing accreditation are scheduled every five to eight years. (See also 7)

50. Other Visits

Visits for information, advice, or evaluation of an accredited program may be arranged prior to the date originally scheduled either on request of the school or on request of the COA. The Committee reserves the right to request a visit whenever circumstances appear to warrant it (see also 35), including a judgment based on the school's annual report to the COA (see 51) that re-evaluation is necessary. Failure of the school to invite the COA for such a visit will be interpreted as an indication of lack of interest by the institution in a continuation of the accreditation. A visit may also be requested by the COA where a school gives evidence of promising innovations or strong developments with which it would be useful for the COA to be familiar. In no case is a visit scheduled without the approval of the school. In case of a visit such as the last, the costs are covered by the COA, not the subject school.

51. Annual Reports

Between site visits, schools whose programs hold accreditation under the 1972 Standards are required to submit annual reports. (See 50) The annual report builds on the school's basic self-study, responds to the recommendations included in the COA report to the school following the last accreditation, provides the school with a mechanism for an on-going self-assessment of its program(s). Submission of the completed annual report forms to the COA constitutes a request for continuation of ALA-accredited status for the program of the reporting school. The COA response to an annual report may be as follows:

(a) Accept the report and continue the program's accreditation. Or

(b) Request additional information (or verification of data contained in the report) and defer action until the next scheduled meeting of the COA. Or

(c) Decline to accept the report and arrange with the school to schedule a site visit as soon as possible to determine the continued accreditability of the program(s). (A program(s) in this situation retains its accredited status until a site visit can be made and action is taken by the COA on the report of the visiting team.)

E. ADVISORY OR CONSULTANT SERVICES

52. COA Advisory Service

As part of a program of advice and assistance to library schools working toward accreditation or reaccreditation of their programs, the COA may schedule informational meetings of various kinds during the Annual Conference and the Midwinter Meeting of ALA. These meetings may be in some instances general sessions dealing with accreditation standards and procedures; at other times they may take the form of individual conferences for representatives of the schools with members of the Committee. In addition, schools offering either accredited or non-accredited programs are free to seek advice related to the Standards and their application from the COA at any time. Such advice may be informal or formal.

53. Informal Advice

"Informal" advice is here defined as that which is given in a short interview, in informal conversation, or by correspondence or telephone.

It may be given by the staff of the Office, by individual members of the COA, or by other librarians or library educators whose knowledge of the subject is considered valuable by the school seeking assistance. Any member of the COA giving such informal advice informs the Accreditation Officer in writing so that a record of the advice will be available to the Committee at a later date when and if a formal evaluation visit is requested. A member of the COA giving informal advice speaks only for himself/herself and not for the Committee on Accreditation. (See also 11)

54. Formal Advice

"Formal" advice is here defined as a site visit by a consultant. While the COA may suggest that a consultant visit would be useful, it is not a requirement of the Committee. COA members do not act as consultants during their term of service on the Committee; however, suggestions of names of consultants can be obtained from the Office. (See also 11) It is highly desirable that a copy of the consultant's report be sent by the school to the Office, to form part of the background file on the school.

55. Consultant Ineligible for Visiting Team

Anyone who serves as a formal consultant to a school seeking accreditation or reaccreditation cannot serve on the visiting team to the same school when accreditation is under consideration by the COA.

56. Information Sought by the COA

When the COA learns of, or a school calls its attention to, innovative methods and/or new program developments that have been introduced to improve library education, the Committee welcomes the opportunity to meet with that school's executive officer, faculty, or students to learn of these advances.

F. COMPLAINTS AGAINST ACCREDITED PROGRAMS

57. Procedure for Handling Complaints

Library education programs accredited by the Committee on Accreditation of the American Library Association operate in the public interest, with due regard for the rights and responsibilities of the faculty, students, and all others related to the implementation of these programs. The Committee on Accreditation occasionally receives requests to investigate alleged violations by a school in which the program of library education leading to the first professional degree has been accredited in accordance with the Standards for Accreditation, 1972. The handling of such requests depends upon the nature of the complaint and of the documented evidence submitted. Only when the evidence indicates conditions which could impair the quality and effectiveness of the program that has been accredited or preclude the satisfactory attainment of that program's goals and objectives will the Committee investigate. The Committee is authorized to judge only those matters which are specifically covered by the Standards. Appropriate grievance procedures must have been exhausted before application to the Committee on Accreditation. Complaints against accredited programs may be sent to the Accreditation Officer of the Committee on Accreditation for transmittal to the Committee. If a complaint meets the criteria given above, the Committee will make further inquiry with the full knowledge of all parties involved in the complaint. This inquiry may lead to a review of the program's accredited status. If there is a decision to change that status, the Committee will advise the school of the appeals procedure established and published by the Committee.